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The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security

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Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to paragraph 31 of General Assembly resolution 55/174 A of 19 December 2000, in which the Assembly requested me to report on the progress of the United Nations Special Mission to Afghanistan (UNSMA). The report, which covers developments since the issuance on 20 November 2000 of my last annual report (A/55/633-S/2000/1106), is also submitted in response to requests by the Security Council for regular information on the main developments in Afghanistan. Two progress reports have been submitted this year, the first on 19 April 2001 (A/55/907-S/2001/384) and the second on 17 August 2001 (A/55/1028-S/2001/789). The present report covers developments regarding Afghanistan until 15 November 2001.

2. Since the terrorist attacks of 11 September, much of my attention, and that of the United Nations system at large, has been focused on Afghanistan. Given the seriousness of the evolving situation in Afghanistan, on 3 October I reappointed Lakhdar Brahimi as my Special Representative, entrusting him with a widened mandate entailing overall authority for the humanitarian and political endeavours of the United Nations in Afghanistan. He will also oversee the development of plans for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of the country. The Security Council noted with appreciation the reappointment of Mr. Brahimi (see S/2001/937). My Special Representative has overarching authority over all United Nations activities in Afghanistan, providing guidance and direction to ensure overall coordination and coherence of action. An Integrated Management Task Force has been established to support Mr. Brahimi in these efforts. I have asked my Personal Representative, Francesc Vendrell, to continue his political functions as my Deputy Special Representative and head of the United Nations Special Mission to Afghanistan.

II. Peacemaking efforts and activities of the Special Mission

A. Peacemaking efforts

3. On 12 November, I opened and chaired a meeting of Ministers for Foreign Affairs and other senior representatives of the "six plus two" group (see para. 49). The next day, 13 November, the Security Council held an open meeting on Afghanistan. I delivered an

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opening statement to the Council at that important meeting.

4. From 10 to 12 March, I visited Pakistan as part of a tour of the South Asian region. Various aspects of the situation in Afghanistan were discussed in my talks with the President and Chief Executive, General Pervez Musharraf, and with the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Abdul Sattar. I expressed the international community's appreciation to Pakistan for extending hospitality to the millions of Afghan refugees who have been forced to flee their country in the past two decades and to take shelter in Pakistan. We agreed that Pakistan would take measures to further aid Afghans who had recently entered Pakistan, while the United Nations system, for its part, would redouble its efforts to provide assistance to Afghans inside Afghanistan so as to discourage further outflows.

5. I also had talks, during my visit to Pakistan, with the then Taliban "Foreign Minister", Wakil Ahmad Mutawakkil, at which I discussed the written agreement, reached by the Taliban and the United Front in November 2000 to pursue dialogue, under my auspices. I asked that implementation of the *fatwa* calling for the destruction of all statues not proceed, and that options instead be explored for relocating them. Shortly thereafter, I was distressed to learn that the two priceless statues of the Buddha in Bamyan had already been destroyed.

6. Since his appointment my Special Representative has undertaken numerous intensive contacts with a wide range of Afghans and with various concerned Governments, in New York and elsewhere, with the aim of accelerating the political process in the light of the rapidly changing circumstances. During a visit to the region from 27 October to 7 November, his contacts included a meeting in Riyadh with the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Saudi Arabia, Prince Saud Al-Faisal, and in Islamabad with President Musharraf and the Minister for Foreign Affairs, as well as the Foreign Secretary, Inâm-ul Haque, and the Director-General of the Inter-Services Intelligence, Lieutenant General Ehsanul Haq. In the Islamic Republic of Iran, Mr. Brahimi met with President Mohammad Khatami and with the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Kamal Kharrazi. Mr. Vendrell accompanied him in Pakistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran. In both countries, Mr. Brahimi consulted with a broad spectrum of Afghans. Mr. Brahimi also went to Rome, where he met with the former King Mohammad Zahir Shah, who informed him that he was willing to help in a manner that was useful and acceptable to everyone.

7. Following his return to Headquarters on 9 November, Mr. Brahimi conferred with a large number of senior officials, including heads of Government and Foreign Ministers, during the week of the general debate in the General Assembly, from 10 to 16 November.

8. On 13 November, Mr. Brahimi presented an in-depth briefing to the Security Council. On 12 November, he gave a briefing to and participated in the high-level meeting of the members of the "six plus two" group, at which most countries were represented at the Foreign Minister level. Furthermore, on 16 November, my Special Representative briefed the members of the "Group of 21" on Afghanistan about the current situation and his peacemaking efforts.

9. Prior to 11 September, my Personal Representative (later Deputy Special Representative) and head of UNSMA held numerous meetings with senior representatives of the Taliban and the United Front. Mr. Vendrell's principal interlocutor on the Taliban side, in Kabul and Kandahar, was the Taliban Foreign Minister, Wakil Ahmad Mutawakkil; he also had contacts with the Governor of Kandahar, Mullah Hassan Rahmani; the Taliban Minister of Education, Amir Khan Muttaqi; the Taliban Deputy Justice Minister, Jalaluddin Shinwari; and the Taliban Deputy Foreign Ministers Mullah Abdul Jalil and Abdul Rahman Zahed. On the United Front side, his main interlocutors in various meetings, inside and outside Afghanistan, were Burhanuddin Rabbani, President of the Islamic State of Afghanistan; the late Commander Ahmad Shah Massoud, Vice-President and Minister of Defence of the Islamic State of Afghanistan; and Foreign Minister Abdullah Abdullah.

10. At the beginning of the year, my Personal Representative had pursued two main objectives, namely, to persuade the Taliban, first, to adhere to the commitments arrived at on 2 November 2000, when they agreed in writing to enter into a process of dialogue with the United Front, and, secondly, to comply with the demands contained in Security Council resolutions 1267 (1999) and 1333 (2000), in particular with regard to Osama bin Laden and the closure of terrorist camps. At virtually every meeting that Mr. Vendrell held with Taliban representatives, he urged them to accept the need to surrender Bin Laden

authorities, religious and community leaders, administrative officials, traditional assemblies of local notables, and representatives of youth and women's groups, as well as the media and the academic community.

24. In May, the Taliban implemented their earlier threat to demand the closure of UNSMA offices by the 20th of the month as a reaction to the imposition of sanctions according to Security Council resolution 1333 (2000), despite assurances from Taliban Foreign Minister Mutawakkil that the Mission's operations would not be hindered. The Unit's presence in Afghanistan was henceforth restricted to Kabul and Faizabad, until September 2001, when all international United Nations staff left the country. The withdrawal also prevented the planned opening of a sub-office in the Panjshir Valley, in United Front-controlled territory. Only national Afghan staff remained in Afghanistan but, owing to restrictions imposed by the Taliban, communication with local UNSMA staff became increasingly difficult. Consequently the Civil Affairs Unit strengthened its presence in Quetta and Peshawar, to liaise with the large Afghan communities living in these areas of Pakistan.

25. Besides its regular reporting, the Unit has conducted studies of the human rights situation, providing the Special Rapporteur on human rights and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights with information on current developments. It also prepared surveys on the administrative and judicial system prevailing in the "Islamic Emirate" and in the Islamic State of Afghanistan, and on the situation of ethnic and religious minorities. In September, the Civil Affairs Officer in Quetta initiated a regional working group on human rights in southern Afghanistan, comprising participants from Afghan non-governmental organizations and United Nations representatives.

26. With the emergence of a new situation since early November, UNSMA has resumed its presence in Kabul and will return to other major urban centres as soon as the security situation permits. In view of the challenges ahead for the United Nations in Afghanistan, it is my intention to recommend in due time that the Mission be strengthened and its role enlarged, in particular its presence on the ground. As an immediate step, the Mission's administrative and logistical capacity needs to be enhanced.

III. Recent developments regarding Afghanistan

A. Political developments

Prior to September

27. The Taliban's decision to destroy the Bamyan Buddhas provoked international outrage, and a number of multilateral and bilateral initiatives were undertaken to attempt to avert the destruction, to no avail. The General Assembly, in resolution 55/243 of 9 March 2001, and the Security Council both condemned the decision and urged the Taliban to desist, as did the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), numerous Member States and others.

28. As requested in Security Council resolution 1333 (2000), I appointed a committee of experts to make recommendations on the monitoring of sanctions, in particular the arms embargo on the Taliban and the closure of terrorist training camps. The committee submitted its report to the Security Council on 22 May (see S/2001/511) after a visit to the region. In its resolution 1363 (2001), adopted on 30 June, the Security Council requested me, inter alia, to establish a mechanism to monitor the implementation of the measures imposed by resolutions 1267 (1999) and 1333 (2000). On 18 September, I appointed five experts to serve on the Monitoring Group, including its Chairman (see S/2001/887).

29. In April, following the destruction of the Bamyan Buddhas, the late Commander Ahmad Shah Massoud undertook a visit to France and Belgium where he met with the Minister for Foreign Affairs of France and the High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy of the European Union, and addressed the European Parliament.

30. The Taliban continued to impose restrictive measures on the territory they controlled in their attempt to realize their vision of a pure Islamic society. They introduced a new educational curriculum dominated by religious subjects at the expense of the humanities and sciences. The Internet was banned, as was a wide range of imported goods. Around 9,000 civil servants were dismissed, ostensibly for budgetary reasons, but many were women and persons suspected

of links to former regimes. Non-Afghans were reported to be increasingly visible in the streets of Kabul, Herat and Kandahar.

31. During a visit in April to Qatar, the current chair of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, a high-level Taliban delegation, including Foreign Minister Mutawakkil, requested OIC to open a relief office in Kabul. The Organization responded positively to this request at its ministerial meeting, held at Bamako from 25 to 27 June, but no office was actually opened.

32. In June, a survey published by the United States Department of State indicated that, of around 5,000 Afghans polled in 27 provinces, nearly 50 per cent agreed that the former King was the personality who could "most successfully" address the problems of Afghanistan.

33. As mentioned in paragraph 14 above, in August the Taliban arrested eight international workers for Shelter Now International, accusing them of trying to convert Afghans to Christianity. Sixteen Afghan staff were charged with the capital crime of apostasy. After initially being denied, consular access and limited family visits were granted. UNSMA was present at the opening session of the trial of the eight foreign nationals, which was suspended following the events of 11 September. The international detainees remained under arrest by the Taliban until they were freed by coalition forces on 15 November, following the flight of the Taliban from Kabul.

The September events and their aftermath

34. On 9 September, Ahmad Shah Massoud was assassinated by two non-Afghan individuals, posing as journalists, who had managed to obtain an audience with him at Khwaja Bahauddin. Although no one has claimed responsibility for the attack, its nature and method suggest the involvement of groups linked to Osama bin Laden.

35. The terrorist attacks two days later in New York and Washington have had profound political consequences for Afghanistan. On 12 September, the Security Council, in resolution 1368 (2001), unequivocally condemned the terrorist attacks of 11 September, regarding such acts of international terrorism as a threat to international peace and security. The Council stressed that those responsible for aiding, supporting or harbouring the perpetrators, organizers and sponsors of such acts would be held accountable, and expressed its readiness to take all necessary steps to respond to the terrorist attacks in accordance with its responsibilities under the Charter. On 28 September, in its resolution 1373 (2001), the Council set out a series of measures by means of which States would combat the threat of international terrorism.

36. The United States, citing its right to self-defence under the Charter of the United Nations, declared that a campaign against international terrorism would be waged targeting those who harboured and supported terrorists as well as the terrorists themselves. On 15 September, it named Osama bin Laden as the prime suspect for the atrocities of 11 September. While the Taliban offered condolences for the terrorist attacks, they denied Osama bin Laden's involvement, and upheld their refusal to comply with Security Council resolutions, despite repeated attempts, including by Pakistan, which also accepted that there was conclusive evidence linking Bin Laden to the attacks, to persuade them to hand him over. Pakistani diplomats later left the country, and the Taliban consulate in Karachi was closed. Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates broke off diplomatic ties with the Taliban. Since then the Taliban Embassy in Islamabad has also been shut down.

37. By the second half of September, the Council for Peace and National Unity of Afghanistan (the "Bonn process") was fully merged with the Rome process. Meanwhile, former King Zahir Shah had initiated a large number of contacts with Afghan and foreign delegations. An agreement in principle was reached between Zahir Shah and the United Front to form a 120-member Supreme Council for National Unity. On 10 October the former King addressed a letter to me conveying his concerns about a power vacuum if the Taliban were to collapse and asking for the deployment of a United Nations force.

38. The Cyprus Meeting for Implementation of Peace in Afghanistan (the "Cyprus process") decided, at a meeting of its executive committee on 20 and 21 October, to send a delegation to Rome to explore, in the presence of a United Nations representative, closer cooperation with the former King's *loya jirga* initiative. In Peshawar on 24 and 25 October, a Conference for Peace and National Unity, organized by Pir Sayid Ahmad Gailani, was attended by almost 1,000 representatives, the largest gathering to date of Pashtun tribal elders supporting a political solution to

the conflict. Both events were attended by representatives of UNSMA.

39. On 7 October, the United States-led coalition launched air strikes against Taliban targets in Afghanistan. The strikes targeted Taliban air capacity, first hitting the command base at Kandahar airport, as well as suspected terrorist training camps and other sites. Air strikes and occasional ground operations by special forces have continued since. As the Taliban continued to refuse to hand over Bin Laden, the coalition war aims were articulated as including their removal from power.

40. An attempt by Abdul Haq, a well-known former commander of the mujahideen, to launch military action against the Taliban in the Pashtun region of southern Afghanistan led to his capture and swift execution by the Taliban on 26 October, a few days after he and his entourage had crossed the border into eastern Afghanistan. Further south, Hamid Karzai, reportedly with 750 armed followers, announced the start of a resistance movement in the district of Dehrawud (Uruzgan Province) early in November. Pashtun tribes in the east and south-east of the country have been reported as being involved in a number of smaller, mostly spontaneous rebellions against the Taliban.

41. On 14 November, in its resolution 1378 (2001), the Security Council, inter alia, expressed its strong support for the efforts of the Afghan people to establish a new and transitional administration leading to the formation of a government. That resolution was adopted following an open debate in the Security Council on 13 November. As indicated in paragraph 8 above, my Special Representative provided an in-depth briefing to the Council on the same day.

B. Regional and international developments related to Afghanistan

42. Afghanistan has been at the centre of much diplomatic activity throughout the year. Even before 11 September, a number of countries felt that the situation in Afghanistan, in particular the Taliban's support for terrorism, warranted serious concern and posed a threat to international security.

43. Afghanistan has been a source of growing regional concern, particularly to its neighbours and in Central Asia. At a meeting in Yerevan, the Presidents of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federation and Tajikistan, as well as Armenia and Belarus, decided to establish a rapid reaction force aimed at repelling incursions by extremist Islamic groups emanating from Afghanistan. In the declaration they adopted on 15 June on the establishment of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the heads of State of China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan agreed to cooperate closely with a view to the implementation of the Shanghai Convention on Combating Terrorism, Separatism and Extremism and to proceed with the establishment of a regional anti-terrorist structure with its headquarters in Bishkek.

44. The United States-Russian Working Group has convened in the course of the year, as have the Joint Indo-Russian Working Group on Afghanistan and the Indo-United States Joint Working Group on Counter-Terrorism. The growing threat of terrorism emanating from Afghanistan was also discussed by the leaders of the Group of Eight at their summit in Genoa in July.

45. The events of 11 September have had profound consequences in the region and events in Afghanistan have since been the focus of intensive high-level diplomatic activity on the part of, inter alia, France, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Italy, Germany, Pakistan, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and the United States, as well as the European Union.

46. Senior security officials from the six signatory States of the Commonwealth of Independent States Collective Security Treaty (Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and the Russian Federation) met in emergency session at Dushanbe on 8 and 9 October to discuss how to respond to the increased tensions in Central Asia resulting from the conflict in Afghanistan.

47. Early in October, the President of Uzbekistan, Islam Karimov, announced that his country was ready to make its airspace available for military aircraft participating in the coalition in the event of strikes against terrorist bases in Afghanistan. Following talks in Tashkent on 5 October with the United States Defense Secretary, Donald Rumsfeld, President Karimov announced that Uzbekistan would allow the United States to use one of its military airfields to conduct search-and-rescue missions and air shipments of humanitarian aid to Afghanistan. Uzbekistan has also reached an agreement with the United Nations on facilitating the passage of aid to Afghanistan.

48. Early in November, following a visit by General Tommy Franks, Commander in Chief of the United States Central Command, and Defense Secretary Rumsfeld, the President of Tajikistan, Emomali Rakhmonov, announced that three Tajik airbases would be available for use by the United States-led coalition, for launching operations in Afghanistan.

C. Activities of the six plus two group

49. On 12 November, I chaired a high-level meeting of the group of six plus two at United Nations Headquarters. Most of its members were represented at the level of Foreign Minister. Following my opening statement, my Special Representative briefed the six plus two on his mission to the region and on the current situation regarding Afghanistan. The meeting concluded with the adoption of a joint statement (see annex). The Ministers and senior representatives of the six plus two also endorsed my proposal to convene an urgent meeting of the Afghan parties under the auspices of my Special Representative. The six plus two met two days prior to the high-level meeting at the level of political directors. That meeting was chaired by Mr. Brahimi.

D. Military situation

50. Fighting has been going on throughout Afghanistan since last December, the fact that fighting is no longer seasonal indicating that the two sides are better equipped and trained for winter warfare.

51. The United Front has been making efforts to reorganize its forces into something resembling a regular army, and to convince its commanders to accept structural changes. These efforts were successful in incorporating commanders loyal to Ismail Khan and General Abdul Rashid Dostum and in persuading former commanders to return to Afghanistan to resume fighting. Ismail Khan and General Dostum returned in May to their former areas and have been active since then. The United Front also received or purchased a significant amount of military equipment.

52. Reports throughout the year consistently suggested that there was a significant presence of non-Afghan fighters, mainly from Pakistan and various Arab countries, on the Taliban side.

53. This year, full-scale fighting started at the beginning of May. Warfare was concentrated in the Farkhar Gorge, east of Taloqan, with the Taliban launching a major offensive on the Chal district and in the Gorge. The objective was to cut off the United Front supply road and to capture the strategic corridor leading to Badakshan, the only province that remained under full United Front control. The United Front managed to repel the attacks, and neither side made any significant gains.

54. The assassination of Commander Massoud on 9 September and the terrorist attacks in the United States two days later added a new dimension to action against the Taliban. Following Massoud's death and an unsuccessful Taliban attack on the Farkhar Gorge on 12 September, the level of fighting between the warring sides declined significantly until, late in September, General Dostum's forces launched an offensive in Balkh Province, while other United Front forces went on the offensive in Takhar Province, north of Taloqan.

55. United States-led coalition forces launched strikes in Afghanistan on 7 October. The first week of precision engagement was conducted by night, targeting mainly air defence and command centres. This was followed by daytime flights, still with the same objectives but shifting to "search and destroy" tactics. Latterly, the United States-led coalition conducted strikes against concentrations of Taliban troops along the main confrontation line.

56. On 9 November, United Front forces under the command of General Dostum, Atta Mohammad and Commander Mohaqqeq pushed forward towards Mazar-e-Sharif and captured the city by late afternoon. The following day, United Front forces launched simultaneous offensives along the main confrontation line in northern Afghanistan and in the areas of Khwajaghar, Farkhar Gorge near Taloqan and Eshkamesh in Takhar Province, and Chal, Baghlan, Nahrin and Pul-i-Khumri in Baghlan Province. The United Front successfully captured all of these areas, as well as Aibak (the capital of Samangan Province) and Bamyan Province as a result of the defection of Taliban commanders. Dostum's troops continued on the offensive, taking the river port of Hairatan, north of Mazar-e-Sharif, and the city of Sheberghan, capital of Jowzjan Province. In the late afternoon of 11 November they seized the capital of Faryab Province, Meymaneh. United Front fighters located on the islands

in Afghanistan. In view of recent international developments, a donor alert was issued early in October for $584 million, currently being adjusted upwards to $654 million.

64. Socio-economic conditions in the country have been affected most by the continuing regional drought, the single most important factor influencing the Afghan economy. In contrast to the drought of 1971, there has been no significant public sector response or relief operation, owing to a lack of resources and the authorities' focus on the war effort. Economically, the drought sharply reduced rural incomes, savings and investment and necessitated a large increase in food grain imports.

65. Furthermore, although generally welcomed, the abrupt implementation of the Taliban ban on the cultivation of the opium poppy removed the country's most remunerative cash crop. This has represented a major income loss both for direct growers and, perhaps more significantly, for the migrant agricultural labourers who previously travelled to south-western and south-eastern Afghanistan to undertake the labour-intensive work that is involved in cultivating the opium crop.

66. A poor harvest for the third successive year meant that WFP had to revise its requirements and in September 2001 WFP appealed for 366,000 tons of food for 5.5 million people. A vulnerability assessment survey was carried out in July 2001 with the participation of the non-governmental organization community in Afghanistan. This assessment is the baseline from which vulnerable groups are identified for assistance over the winter period. In 2001 WFP continued to concentrate on feeding the most vulnerable groups in Afghanistan, including drought victims, internally displaced persons, the urban poor beneficiaries of WFP-sponsored bakery projects in Kabul and Mazar-e-Sharif, and children who benefited from school feeding projects in selected parts of the country.

67. Since the evacuation of the humanitarian community from Afghanistan, WFP has managed food deliveries in Afghanistan from locations outside the country, working in tandem with approximately 140 national staff in country. As part of the overall United Nations coordinated response, WFP has contingency plans for the food needs of 6 million people inside Afghanistan and 1.5 million in neighbouring countries. Food is being dispatched into Afghanistan from the Islamic Republic of Iran, Pakistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan, and deliveries will have begun from Uzbekistan in November. Food distribution is carried out by implementing partners with national staff working inside Afghanistan.

68. In the first half of 2001, UNHCR, together with its partners, facilitated the voluntary return of over 16,000 refugees to specific target areas, selected according to criteria such as food security, prospects for harvest, presence of internally displaced persons, presence of landmines, availability of water, and support from other agencies. In addition, under the Poverty Eradication and Community Empowerment (PEACE) programme of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) and UNHCR reached a consensus on providing assistance in areas of return in order to prevent further displacement. A needs assessment was initiated to this effect. In addition to those returnees facilitated by UNHCR, there were approximately 36,000 spontaneous returnees. Furthermore, 82,000 Afghans, an alarming number, were observed to be forcibly returned during the first half of 2001.

69. Since 11 September and the evacuation of international staff, UNHCR has had very limited access to Afghanistan. This has prompted a revision of its approach to assistance inside Afghanistan, focusing on two aspects: the continuation of life-sustaining quick impact projects through established local networks of non-governmental organizations and the provision of non-food items through cross-border mechanisms.

70. Immense efforts have been initiated to prevent a further deterioration of the health situation. To help the people of Afghanistan survive this winter, besides providing food, shelter and security it is crucial that health workers are able to operate unhindered in the field, and that supplies and medicines reach vulnerable populations. About 7.5 million Afghans live in areas where almost no health services are available to them. In the year under review, the World Health Organization (WHO) has been assessing and monitoring the health situation, coordinating and standardizing health sector inputs in reproductive health and communicable disease control, especially tuberculosis, malaria and vaccine preventable diseases,

of the Panj River captured both the district of Emam Saheb and the river port of Sher Khan in Kunduz Province.

57. Following their rout all over northern Afghanistan on 12 November, the Taliban forces there concentrated mainly in Kunduz Province, having failed in their attempt to withdraw to southern Afghanistan. Also on 12 November, the United Front continued to press forward, capturing Herat city and Ghowr Province.

58. On 12 November, the United Front launched an offensive on the Shomali front, north of Kabul, entering Kabul on 13 November without a battle, since the Taliban had already abandoned the capital city.

IV. Humanitarian activities and human rights

59. In the year under review there has been a drastic worsening of the humanitarian situation in Afghanistan. A humanitarian disaster of enormous proportions is unfolding owing to the combined effects of chronic poverty, hunger, war, drought, displacement, and abuse of civilians. It is currently estimated that up to 6 million people, one fourth of the whole population, are vulnerable and in need of assistance. Of great concern is the safety and well-being of more than 1 million internally displaced people. To respond to the heightened humanitarian challenges of the crisis in Afghanistan since 11 September, a regional coordination structure has been put in place headed by the United Nations Regional Humanitarian Coordinator. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Children's Fund and the World Food Programme (WFP) have also activated strong regional functions to respond to the crisis in the most efficient way.

60. It is becoming increasingly clear that a significant number of people are in grave danger of succumbing to famine, cold or disease. In 2000, despite the presence of international assistance actors and increasing aid hubs, the second year of drought still caused hundreds of hunger-related deaths in the Central Highlands. In addition, the limited supplies available were insufficient to save people from dying of hypothermia in camps of internally displaced persons in the city of Herat and in the northern region. Given the third consecutive year of drought, further internal displacement, continued fighting and, more recently, a breakdown of law and order, it is reasonable to assume, through qualitative and quantitative extrapolations, that thousands of civilian deaths will occur in the winter of 2001/2002 from hunger-related causes, hypothermia and curable diseases.

61. The withdrawal of all international United Nations staff on 12 and 13 September for security reasons and the expulsion on 14 September by the Taliban authorities of all foreigners from the country had a significant impact on the ability of the aid community to effectively provide the kind of assistance required for the most vulnerable. International United Nations and non-governmental organization staff were playing a vital role in Afghanistan, not only supporting the delivery of assistance but also as advocates for the protection of civilians. In their absence, the responsibility for the continuation of humanitarian operations in the country is in the hands of national staff. The deteriorating security situation has however severely hampered the capacity of many national staff to continue their duties in the normal way. In the absence of any international staff and with an increasingly uncertain situation, the lack of proper accountability, monitoring of activities and reporting capacity, as well as the increased pressure on national staff, are of great concern.

62. In some parts of the country, in the months before September 2001, the implementation of assistance programmes had been hampered by restrictions on access put in place by the Taliban authorities. Arrests of humanitarian staff by Taliban forces and raids conducted by the religious police on hospitals increased. United Nations staff and aid project managers were frequently subjected to coercion and abusive behaviour by the Taliban authorities. The humanitarian consequences of the increasingly difficult operating environment resulted in a reduced ability to reach populations in need, particularly women.

63. Owing to the increasing scale of the emergency in the country, the consolidated appeal for Afghanistan was revised upward, from $229 million requested in November 2000 to $254 million in February 2001, and upwards again, in August 2001, to $333 million, of which $150 million had been received as at the end of September. It is noteworthy that in 2001 the assistance community received significantly more resources than in previous years to respond to the humanitarian crisis

contacts with the members of their respective executive committees, to bring about a measure of coordination among the various initiatives in favour of a *loya jirga* or an Afghan Grand Assembly — namely the so-called Rome, Bonn and Cyprus processes. My Personal Representative convened a series of meetings at Geneva (known as the "Geneva Initiative") of the four countries most intimately connected with the various processes, namely, Germany, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Italy and the United States.

18. In addition, my Personal Representative and his UNSMA colleagues met on several occasions with Pir Sayid Ahmad Gailani, head of the National Islamic Front of Afghanistan, as well as with former mujahideen commanders, tribal leaders and personalities from various political and social groups active both inside and outside the country, contacts which have been intensified since 11 September.

19. In view of the impasse reached because of the Taliban's unwillingness to pursue any kind of dialogue with the opposition, my Personal Representative intensified his contacts with Governments that could be instrumental in bringing peace to Afghanistan, in particular those of the six plus two group. Even prior to 11 September, the need for a unified approach, especially among Afghanistan's neighbours, had become all the more important in view of the growing role of the foreign "guests" in Afghanistan and their negative influence on the Taliban leadership.

20. During the past year, Mr. Vendrell met, in the region and in respective capitals, with Heads of State, Foreign Ministers and other senior officials of the Governments of all six plus two members, in addition to other concerned countries such as Belgium, France, Germany, India, Italy, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, as well as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the European Union, including Javier Solana, High Representative for the European Union's Common Foreign and Security Policy. At all those meetings, Mr. Vendrell's principal message was the pressing need to adopt a common comprehensive approach to Afghanistan, including the desirability of an improved military balance between the warring sides, as well as the need for the international community to set clear objectives for itself and to adopt a strategy to achieve them. Within such a framework a prime objective should be to ensure the establishment of an Afghan government that enjoyed both internal and external legitimacy, based on the right of the Afghans to freely determine their form of government according to internationally recognized principles such as representative and accountable government, respect for human rights, including those of ethnic and religious minorities, and a commitment to anti-terrorist policies and friendly relations with its neighbours.

21. It was with these goals in mind that the United Kingdom hosted a brainstorming session on Afghanistan at Weston Park in July, attended by individuals from the six plus two members and other concerned Governments, as well as the United Nations and a small number of academic experts. The Weston Park conclusions in turn informed a meeting convened later in July of the ongoing "Track II" initiative. My Personal Representative, with the cooperation of the Government of Germany, had last November initiated a series of meetings of former senior officials from the Islamic Republic of Iran, Pakistan, the Russian Federation and the United States in order to approximate the positions of the Governments of those countries relating to Afghanistan.

B. Activities of the Mission, including its Civil Affairs Unit

22. As defined by the Security Council in its resolution 1214 (1998), the Civil Affairs Unit has been mandated to monitor the situation in Afghanistan, promote and support respect for minimum humanitarian standards, and deter massive and systematic violations of human rights and international humanitarian law. In the course of the last year, the Civil Affairs Unit had to adjust its activities to the political restrictions imposed by the Taliban and, in recent weeks, to the ongoing military operation in Afghanistan.

23. In the first months of the year, the Civil Affairs Unit had six offices in Afghanistan, at Jalalabad, Herat, Mazar-e-Sharif, Kandahar, Kabul and Faizabad — which has been under United Front control throughout — each deploying international and local staff, engaging various sectors of civil society, observing human rights and surveying social and economic trends in the country, and establishing a regular dialogue with the authorities and representatives of civil society. The interlocutors of the Civil Affairs Officers have included political

and cease support for terrorism, warning them of the serious consequences that their lack of cooperation could entail, particularly if there were to be another terrorist incident that could be attributed to Bin Laden's network.

11. In addition, my Personal Representative sought to convince the Taliban to consider various formulae that would allow them to participate in direct or indirect talks with the United Front, specifically at the invitation of the Governments of Japan and Uzbekistan. The Taliban declined these invitations, refusing to attend any meeting at which the United Nations was present. They further declined, for the same reason, an invitation by the Government of Germany issued to the two warring sides to visit Berlin late in July to present their views to a meeting of former senior officials of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Pakistan, the Russian Federation and the United States of America, convened by my Personal Representative. The United Front was represented at that meeting by Abdullah Abdullah, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Islamic State of Afghanistan.

12. As it became increasingly evident that the Taliban had no intention of pursuing the process of dialogue under United Nations auspices and that they would not accept the United Nations as an impartial intermediary, Mr. Vendrell concentrated his efforts on attempting — without success — to persuade the Taliban not to carry out the *fatwa* ordering the destruction of the Bamyan Buddhas and other pre-Islamic artifacts. Similarly, after the Taliban announced that they were considering requiring Hindus in Afghanistan to wear identity labels on their clothing to distinguish them from Moslems — provoking widespread international outrage — my Personal Representative undertook sustained démarches with Taliban Foreign Minister Mutawakkil to prevent such discriminatory action being taken. In the event, it was not.

13. My Personal Representative was obliged to direct many of his endeavours towards preventing, or at least postponing, the threatened closure by the Taliban of the Mission's offices in Afghanistan. The four regional offices in Taliban-held areas were eventually forced to close in mid-May. Another issue to which Mr. Vendrell devoted considerable time was the forced relocation in July of the Mission's premises in Kabul following the repossession of its compound by the Deputy Chairman of the Taliban Council of Ministers, Hassan Akhund, for his personal use.

14. Following the arrest of 8 foreign nationals and 16 Afghan staff working for the non-governmental organization Shelter Now International at the beginning of August, my Personal Representative intervened, first trying to ensure consular access to the foreign detainees, which was granted, and then turning his efforts towards securing their release. In the event of their not being released, he pressed for a speedy and fair trial, followed by a display of clemency — in the case of the foreigners, their expulsion from the country. Contacts with the Taliban, on this and all other issues, ceased following the terrorist attacks of 11 September.

15. The United Front, for its part, demonstrated a good deal of openness and receptivity throughout, and remained ready to implement the agreement of 2 November 2000. Among topics discussed by Mr. Vendrell with United Front representatives were governance and human rights issues; their vision for the future of Afghanistan, including the possible convening of a *loya jirga* and a potential role for the former King; contacts with the former King and with non-warring Afghan groups abroad; possible avenues for achieving the reopening of meaningful negotiations with the Taliban; and the military situation. In the period covered by this report, UNSMA, particularly its Civil Affairs Unit, was able to deepen its cooperation with the United Front and expand its activities significantly in the territory under their control at the time.

16. While Mr. Vendrell has met no Taliban representative since 11 September, he has pursued his discussions with the United Front through meetings and other contacts with Burhanuddin Rabbani, Abdullah Abdullah and other leaders of the United Front. His discussions have covered such issues as the military and humanitarian situation in Afghanistan, as well as prospects for a *loya jirga* to be convened by the former King. Central to these talks was the question of the future dispensation in a post-Taliban Afghanistan, and the importance of ensuring compliance with international humanitarian and human rights norms in any and all areas under the control of the United Front.

17. My Personal Representative, being aware through the Mission's various contacts with a large number of Afghans that there might be a useful role for the former King as a catalyst for change in Afghanistan, intensified his contacts with the former King and members of his entourage in Rome, particularly after the events of 11 September. He also sought, through

investigating and responding to outbreaks of disease, and providing training courses and emergency health supplies.

71. WHO, UNICEF and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) have been working with partners to pre-position and provide essential emergency supplies. Provision of supplies to areas that may be cut off by snow has been a priority. On the basis of all available health sector inputs from United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations, it is estimated that about 28 per cent of the needed medical supplies for the next three months are already in place, and timely delivery of the remainder is expected.

72. The collection of Afghan health information by WHO, in collaboration with United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations, has been hampered by a breakdown in communications and transportation. Supply hubs in Peshawar, Quetta, Mashhad and Turkmenabad were not only crucial to shipping food and supplies across the border but also became coordination centres for the flow of information and support to national staff in Afghanistan.

73. In accordance with a decision taken by local health authorities and supported by partner agencies to proceed as scheduled with the anti-polio campaigns, two rounds were undertaken in the autumn months to continue the momentum of the three spring rounds. Oral polio vaccine and vitamin A were administered to more than 5 million Afghan children during each round. In collaboration with local and international non-governmental organizations working inside Afghanistan, UNFPA has funded efforts to strengthen a large number of existing clinics so that they can deliver a basic package of reproductive health services as part of basic primary health care.

74. In response to the emergency needs of the displaced population in Afghanistan, UNICEF, in collaboration with local authorities and non-governmental organization partners, implemented an emergency plan which included immunization against measles and monitoring and referral systems for obstetric emergencies in camps of internally displaced persons and in Herat hospital. Clean delivery and newborn kits for health services were made available to the displaced. The emergency response also addressed the coordination of nutrition activities and the nutritional needs of children in drought-affected areas and the camps.

75. In camps for internally displaced persons and areas most affected by drought, UNICEF and WHO have also been instrumental in improving the provision of water and sanitation-related services.

76. The UNDP Poverty Eradication and Community Empowerment programme assumes a direct and indirect correlation between peace-building and conflict prevention on the one hand and community empowerment and poverty eradication on the other. PEACE is an example of an integrated community development programme utilizing traditional Afghan structures to cope with drought, displacement and ongoing conflict. The implementing partners of UNDP (FAO, UNOPS and Habitat) continued to focus on good governance, food security and sustainable livelihoods, the provision of basic social services and the reintegration of refugees and the internally displaced in spite of numerous obstacles.

77. The ongoing drought remained the greatest problem for agriculture production. In addition to seed-multiplication activities in 19 provinces, integrated livestock production and animal health programmes, FAO led the preparation of a food security strategy for Afghanistan. Projects of the UNOPS Afghanistan Rural Rehabilitation Programme, designed to enhance the capacity of women's organizations through revolving funds, microcredit and income-generation activities, targeted female-headed households and provided support to communities in their points of origin. The role of Habitat in rebuilding urban communities included water supply rehabilitation, sanitation, shelter, access, relief and additional social service projects, taking into account increasing vulnerability. In the context of PEACE, emergency assistance was designed to decrease food insecurity and increase employment opportunities. Rehabilitation and socio-economic reintegration projects were implemented in 50 districts, targeting the almost 10 per cent of Afghans affected by disability. The UNOPS Comprehensive Disabled Afghans Programme also provided primary education to 10,000 girls and boys in selected districts where the formal education system had collapsed. The activities of all PEACE partners were minimized following the events of 11 September 2001.

78. UNESCO is working with other United Nations agencies to evolve an action plan for emergency

educational response for the Afghan children displaced as a result of events since September. An International Network on Emergency Education, comprising UNESCO, UNICEF, UNHCR and international non-governmental organizations has been formed to coordinate efforts in the field of education for Afghans. UNESCO is also developing a post-conflict strategy to rehabilitate and reinvigorate the education system in Afghanistan, which will include revival of girls' education, secondary education and tertiary education, with particular emphasis on the development of human resources needed for national reconstruction. Support to education has been provided in camps of internally displaced persons, including a school for 600 girls and boys in one camp in Herat and classes for 900 girls and boys in Takhar Province.

Narcotics

79. In 2001, opium poppy cultivation in Afghanistan amounted to 7,606 hectares, representing a 91 per cent reduction from the estimate of 82,172 hectares in 2000. While there has been a sharp reduction in most of the former major growing areas, there has been an increase in area under cultivation in some places, mainly in the provinces of Badakhshan and Samangan. In Badakhshan, there was an increase from 2,458 hectares in 2000 to 6,342 hectares in 2001. Total production of opium in 2001 is estimated at 185 tons of raw opium, 94 per cent less than the 2000 output of 3,276 tons, and 96 percent less than the bumper harvest of 4,581 tonnes reported by the 1999 survey. Preliminary data for 2001 suggest that this year's sharp reduction in opium production in Afghanistan has not been offset by increases in other areas or countries. The reduction is apparently the result of the implementation of the opium poppy ban issued in July 2000 by the Taliban leader, Mullah Omar.

80. The tragic events of 11 September brought an abrupt halt to new initiatives intended to respond to the Taliban's ban on opium production. Following the terrorist attacks, the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) had to suspend all its activities inside Afghanistan for security reasons and the inter-agency conference planned for early October was postponed. However, UNDCP has since been involved in the coordinated response to the renewed emergency to ensure that the drug control issue will be addressed once conditions inside Afghanistan permit the resumption of assistance programmes. Current developments in Afghanistan have again highlighted the fact that criminal activities associated with drug trafficking and terrorism financed by illicit drug money indeed pose a serious threat to security and stability in this region. Pursuing its strategy and the implementation of the regional action plan that was approved in September 2000, UNDCP has continued its support to drug interdiction capacities of the countries around Afghanistan. In this vein, UNDCP organized a technical-level meeting of the group of six plus two on the drug issue at Islamabad in September 2001.

Human rights

81. Prior to 11 September, the human rights situation in Afghanistan was of major concern given the widespread and systemic abuse of human rights and international humanitarian law by all the warring parties. Civilians have, traditionally, borne the brunt of the fighting in Afghanistan and this continues to be the case. During the past year, and as the crisis in Afghanistan became more acute, front-line communities in particular were subjected to summary executions and arbitrary detention on a routine basis. The forced recruitment of men by different warring parties has been a significant concern and a major factor in refugee flows. Similarly, the discrimination practised against women and minority groups exacerbated suffering that has, in turn, contributed to population flows. Recent weeks have seen massive displacement of civilians as they fled the direct and indirect impact of war, including bombing in residential areas and the relocation of military equipment and personnel to those areas.

82. The ongoing and fast-changing military situation, subsequent change of political power, and lawlessness in areas such as Mazar, where different minority groups have in the past been subjected to atrocities and tremendous loss of life, underlines the absolute importance of protecting the rights of civilians. All concerned authorities must act accordingly. The reality of Afghans fleeing conflict and associated problems, including forced recruitment, and being unable to enjoy their right to asylum and international protection is an immediate and continuing concern that UNHCR and others are struggling to address. The protracted nature of the crisis in Afghanistan, and the way in which the war is prosecuted, have significant implications for the full range of rights to which Afghans are entitled. Millions of Afghans are unable to exercise such

fundamentals as their right to adequate food, housing, health and physical security.

83. Sustainable peace, reconciliation, reconstruction and development cannot be built on a foundation of impunity. Hence, the Afghan people and their international partners must commit themselves to addressing the problems of the past by ending impunity and ensuring accountability for past abuses, including gross and systematic violation of human rights. Furthermore, international human rights and humanitarian law standards must provide the foundation for all reconstruction and development activities. Disarmament, mine clearance, the removal of cluster bomb remnants and the reconstruction of the country's infrastructure will also be important prerequisites for securing the economic, social and cultural rights of the Afghan people, as well as their right to development.

84. An urgent response is also required to immediate protection needs, where particular attention must be paid to groups at risk, such as populations in newly conquered territory, women, minorities and persons sought for recruitment as soldiers. All parties must review the conduct of their military operations to ensure strict compliance with the rules of international humanitarian law. The United Nations plans to bolster its monitoring, reporting, protection and advisory capacities on the ground.

V. Observations and conclusions

85. In my previous reports, I had warned that the situation in Afghanistan could continue to deteriorate unless the world community paid due attention and took coordinated and comprehensive action to remedy it. This has been a long and difficult year both for the Afghans, who have faced unending war and drought, and for the United Nations, which has confronted numerous obstacles put in place by the Taliban concerning a variety of political and humanitarian issues. The last two months have altered the Afghan landscape irrevocably, however, offering a fresh opportunity to tackle a problem to which, only a few weeks ago, there appeared to be no solution. The people of Afghanistan and the international community must rise to this challenge.

86. One of the most important factors, which has had a seriously negative effect on developments in Afghanistan in the past year, is the increasing presence of foreigners. In this connection, I recall the observation made in my last report (A/55/1028-S/2001/789, para. 53):

> "It is a matter of particular concern that the number of foreigners fighting alongside the Taliban has not declined, but rather, to the contrary, the presence of so-called 'guests' is increasingly noticeable in the major urban centres. This adds to the suspicion that certain foreigners play a growing decision-making role within the Taliban leadership to the detriment of those Afghan elements within the Taliban who are considered more pragmatic or moderate."

87. Throughout the year, the Taliban became increasingly uncooperative as the influence of extremists closely linked with al-Qa'ida network grew. The number of foreigners fighting for the Taliban surged, and their role in helping the Taliban carry out massacres of civilians, particularly in the Hazarajat region of central Afghanistan, and in serving as shock troops for Taliban military offensives against the United Front was significantly enhanced.

88. Afghans from all factions including the Taliban reported that al-Qa'ida leaders were heavily involved in decision-making with the Taliban, not only in the military campaign against the United Front but increasingly in all social and political aspects of Taliban policy towards the Afghan population. Moreover, it became clearer over the year that the tone of Mullah Mohammed Omar's decrees and statements had evolved from concern with just Afghan issues to notably greater support for a global jihad, as promoted by Bin Laden.

89. The earliest indication of this new obstinacy was the Taliban's refusal to engage in any meaningful political talks, despite their written undertaking at the end of last year to enter into a process of dialogue with the United Front under my good offices. Their intransigence was again in evidence when they proceeded with the wilful destruction of the two priceless Bamyan Buddhas in March, ignoring the outrage that their action provoked not only around the world but also among a large number of Afghans whose heritage was being systematically devastated. In May, UNSMA was forced to close its four regional offices after several turbulent months, following the imposition by the Security Council of further sanctions

against the Taliban in December 2000. In June, there was a very real threat that restrictive conditions imposed by the Taliban would compel WFP to terminate its bakery programme in Kabul, one of the few sources of food available to large sections of the city's impoverished population — only one instance of the mounting difficulties faced by the international humanitarian community in bringing aid to the Afghans. The hardening attitude of the Taliban was again on display in July, when they issued a decree imposing narrow restrictions on the activities of United Nations and other foreign aid workers.

90. A particularly serious obstacle to any progress was the Taliban's total unwillingness to heed the international community's concerns as expressed in various Security Council resolutions, especially their failure to entertain any serious negotiation regarding Osama bin Laden and the closure of terrorist training camps. My Personal Representative time and again exhorted the Taliban to hand over Bin Laden in compliance with those resolutions, and repeatedly spelled out the consequences that were likely to ensue from their continued refusal to do so. He specifically warned them that any incident similar to those attributed to Osama bin Laden in the past would have catastrophic consequences for the Taliban and for the Afghans.

91. As it became increasingly apparent that United Nations efforts vis-à-vis the Taliban were unlikely to be fruitful in the foreseeable future and that the gap between the Taliban and the international community was widening, my Personal Representative focused his attention on building a consensus among the various countries involved and interested in Afghanistan, in order to set in motion a change of approach that would facilitate a solution to the Afghan problem. Those efforts bore fruit after 11 September, as the groundwork already done facilitated the United Nations efforts to build an international consensus on the future of Afghanistan.

92. A central theme that I have pursued during the course of the year is the need for the Security Council to adopt a comprehensive approach to Afghanistan, as the only way of ending the conflict, while at the same time addressing the specific concerns of the international community, such as terrorism, narcotics, human rights and the persistent humanitarian and refugee crisis. Such a comprehensive approach should have twin objectives, namely, (a) enabling the Afghans to exercise their right to freely determine their form of government through an internationally acceptable mechanism, such as elections or a fully representative *loya jirga*; and (b) ensuring a stable and unified Afghanistan at peace with its neighbours.

93. Such an approach, complemented by the creation of a rehabilitation and reconstruction plan for Afghanistan as an incentive to achieve and cement a political settlement, would address two major root causes of the Afghan conflict, namely the lack of legitimacy of successive regimes since the 1970s, which has opened the door to persistent internal challenges and facilitated the intervention of outside forces in support of one claimant or another, and the continued degradation of Afghan institutions and infrastructure. I have been encouraged by the interest of the international community in supporting the reconstruction of Afghanistan, as evidenced in the meeting co-sponsored by the United States and Japan in Washington on 20 November and a forthcoming meeting in Brussels organized by the European Union. I have designated Mark Malloch Brown, Administrator of UNDP, to take on the responsibility of leading the early recovery effort in Afghanistan. He will carry out this urgent task in his capacity as Chairman of the United Nations Development Group.

94. While a good deal of preparatory work had been undertaken before 11 September to build up international support for the objectives set out above, the dramatic changes brought about by the terrorist attacks of 11 September have made these objectives easier to achieve. The international community's renewed focus on Afghanistan after years of neglect, and the realization that a military campaign to root out terrorism from Afghanistan required a simultaneous political process leading to the formation of a legitimate Afghan government, offer renewed hope to the Afghan people that they may at last get the kind of government to which they have long aspired.

95. The challenge that faces us now is to speed up the delivery of humanitarian assistance to the Afghans, to help chart a path that will lead to a stable and unified Afghanistan and rebuild a country shattered by over two decades of war.

96. With this in mind I decided to ask Mr. Brahimi to serve as my Special Representative with overall responsibility for the political, humanitarian and

reconstruction aspects of the United Nations efforts in Afghanistan.

97. I am very encouraged by the international community's support for the intensified efforts of the United Nations in Afghanistan. Mr. Brahimi and his team will make every effort to help the Afghan parties to build bridges towards a brighter and sustainable future, with a broad-based and fully representative government that will be at peace internally and with its neighbours. The talks with representatives of the Afghan parties in Bonn that started on 27 November are a first step in this direction.

98. As I have stated on several occasions during the past weeks, any solution to the Afghan crisis must be "home-grown". The international community cannot impose a settlement on the Afghan people. I am confident that the Afghan parties will reach an acceptable and legitimate settlement if they approach the difficult path ahead with a constructive spirit and a genuine willingness to compromise for the greater good and well-being of all people living in and returning to Afghanistan. The United Nations stands ready to assist the people of Afghanistan in these endeavours.

Annex

Statement on the situation in Afghanistan adopted on 12 November 2001 by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs and other senior representatives of the six plus two

1. The heads of delegation met at United Nations Headquarters under the auspices of the Secretary-General to discuss the situation in Afghanistan.

2. They deplored the acts of international terrorism carried out in the United States on 11 September 2001.

3. The Ministers and other senior representatives of the six plus two condemned the export of international terrorism by al-Qa'ida network and the ruling Taliban authorities for allowing the continued use of Afghan territory for such terrorist activities. The Ministers supported efforts by the Afghan people to rid themselves of the Taliban regime.

4. They supported the efforts of the international community to root out terrorism, in keeping with the Charter of the United Nations, including relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions. They reaffirmed their commitments, in particular, to implementing Security Council resolutions 1267 (1999), 1333 (2000) and 1363 (2001). Al-Qa'ida network, other terrorist groups inside Afghanistan and their Taliban supporters should be brought to justice.

5. The members of the six plus two reaffirmed their full support for the sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity of Afghanistan and pledged their continued support to efforts of the Afghan people to find a political solution to the Afghan crisis, and they agreed that there should be the establishment in Afghanistan of a broad-based, multi-ethnic, politically balanced, freely-chosen Afghan administration representative of their aspirations and at peace with its neighbours. This administration must be able to meet the needs of the Afghan people and respect human rights, regional stability and Afghanistan's international obligations, including the suppression of trade in narcotics. In this connection, the Ministers welcomed efforts to create such an administration by Afghans both from within Afghanistan and from among the Afghan diaspora. They endorsed the previous efforts of the six plus two to deal with these issues.

6. They welcomed the central role of the United Nations in assisting the Afghan people in developing a political alternative to the Taliban regime. In particular, the Ministers endorsed the work of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ambassador Lakhdar Brahimi, including to facilitate efforts by Afghan groups committed to a free and peaceful Afghanistan to establish a broad-based Afghan administration on an urgent basis.

7. The members of the six plus two pledged continued support for the humanitarian efforts of the United Nations to alleviate the suffering of the Afghan people, both inside Afghanistan and in refugee camps located in neighbouring countries. They urged additional contributions from donor countries to meet these pressing humanitarian needs. They also welcomed efforts by the international community to begin planning now for the long-term reconstruction of Afghanistan once a broadly-based government has assumed office and peace has been restored.

8. They pledged their continued support to the Afghan people and to the Secretary-General, supported by his Special Representative, in their efforts to restore freedom and peace to Afghanistan.